

Who Was Cheated and Who Received the Square Deal in This Little Transaction Which Involved Love, Money, Leisure, Work and Domestic Affairs?



Fleshpots



Rita Weiman's Story of Courtship and Marriage—"Let's Gently Close the Book of Poems and Open the Ledger," He Suggested to the Girl.

THEY had driven home from the country club, under silence between them—that thick, hard silence which can separate two who had never before been so close. The road leaped ahead of them, speeding from their onrush like some live thing eager to escape. The gleam of wetness on its smooth surface, reflecting the green of overhanging branches, might have been the coat of a serpent.

The eyes of the girl in the car had been very cool—quite different from the man's; his were burning. The car spun up the driveway to a colonial house, dingy with futility age, and pulled up at the steps in an something of that wet greenness, abrupt halt. The man stopped down, helped the girl, without looking at her—lifted his cap.

"Tommy"—she held to the hand that would have dropped from hers—"come in—just a moment. Please. I don't want you to go from me with bitterness—"

He cut short the soft-spoken words. "What I feel is of no consequence. You've proved that."

"There—you see! You are condemning me. And I can't let you do that. Tom—please! This is the last favor I'll ever ask of you."

As if further discussion were too much for him, he followed her into the hall, into the library at one side, where a coal fire burned under the dulled marble mantel.

The girl unwound the gray veil that misted from her motor hat. She lifted the hat, tossing it on a chair, and ran long, fine fingers through her burnished hair. There was such a mass of it that her head drooped, as if its weight were too heavy to carry. Her figure was so frail, so delicate in outline, that her height, quite above the average, was startling.

She started to pull a spindle-legged armchair toward the fireplace. The arm came off in her hand. She jerked it back into place with a staccato viciousness.

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they raced along the road. Evelyn Grosvenor had not been beautiful then. Long and lanky would have described her—slightly freckled, with narrow gray eyes.

But to the boy who loved her she had always been lovely. "I know I've hurt you, Tom," she said at last; "I know I seem heartless. But I couldn't go through in my married life what I've gone through all these years as a girl. We'd both be terribly unhappy. And I don't want to be to blame for your unhappiness as well as my own."

No—of course not! He gave a curt laugh. "You mean I'm responsible for it now. But this won't last, and the other would. This is just your pride—"

He clipped short the sentence, his voice haggard as his eyes. "Pride—eh? Well, suppose we let it go at that. Marriage, I dare say, is a question of economics, not ethics—to a woman. And you appear to be working out your problem satisfactorily. So we'll let mine go by the board."

A slight sob came into her voice. Her fine fingers interlaced nervously. "At least, the man I'm going to marry is more generous than you. I told him I'd care for you ever since we were children. He knows that in giving you up I'm making a great sacrifice. We understand each other perfectly. He wants a wife who's decorative to lavish his money on—"

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"Fleshpot," she read, "a pot or vessel in which flesh is cooked; plenty; high living. Any sensual indulgence."

And below: "In the land of Egypt . . . we sat by the fleshpots and . . . did eat bread to the full."—Ex. xvi. 3.

She frowned in puzzlement and closed the book.

THE organ chanted "O Perfect Love" and the church was dim and accented. The air was weighted with just the amount of solemn suspense suited to the occasion, ready to be roused to animation at the appearance of the ethereal bride.

Outside on the wet avenue, pushing close to the red and white awning, surged the soft crowd of that will stand hours in the rain for a glimpse of the woman whose translucent they have been reading about for weeks past. Policemen rightly maintained the dignity of authority. It had all the fidelity of a big show magnificently staged.

In a few far back in a dark corner of the church sat two dim figures. Identical—a blankness assumed, a mask to cover thought. The man's eyes did not move from the altar. The girl's did not move from him.

"Man is an odd animal," he said more to himself than to her. "Wonder why I've come."

"Pride," she answered softly. "You're a soldier, Tom. You wouldn't run away and hide."

"No, I'm not. I don't believe she'd go through with it." The girl reached over a small hand, touched his clenched one.

"Tom—I wish I could do something. I've suffered, too. I think it's beastly."

"No—it's wisdom, Peg. It's the thing she wants—and she's grabbing it. Dare say each one of us has something we'd sell our souls for. Mine is success—now. What's yours?"

"Not to be lonely," she whispered. "Lonely!" He swung about, looked down at the plain little face, the sensitive lips that were not quite steady.

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ran a hand over the filmy folds of veil, then lightly kissed Evelyn's cheek and disappeared on the arm of an usher.

The organ sent forth the triumphant strains of the wedding march from "Lohengrin," and Evelyn moved forward.

Tulle shot with crystal, like a veil of mist, enveloped her. Her supple form floated in the midst of it like nothing tangible or earthly. A long sigh, a breath of disbelief, swept over those assembled.

"Undine!" murmured one. "Great Scott!" exclaimed a bosom friend of the bridegroom, "is she real?"

"Well," observed his companion, "every man to his fancy, but hanged if I'd want to marry a shadow!"

Up the aisle on her brother's arm, with eyes downcast, Evelyn glided, thrilling, conscious of the stir she was creating, of the stir she would always create now that she had come into her own!

The twelve ushers separated, six on either side of the aisle. Evelyn passed between them.

It had all been carefully rehearsed, and it went off as smoothly as magic. . . . to love and to cherish," sighed the clergyman's voice.

Samuel repeated the words—then Evelyn.

Back in the dimness of a rear pew, two faces turned from the altar. Their eyes met. And though neither one of them knew it, their hands were clasped.

Sam Partridge took his bride to the Pacific coast, thence on a trip round the world. Rather, he tripped through the Orient, stopping long enough to buy embroideries and jewels in Japan and China, and jewels in India. Both were eager to get to the fashionable resorts of Europe.

At Aix, Evelyn took the town by storm while Sam took the waters. In Paris Evelyn tangoed to home tunes while Sam hobnobbed with home cronies. And, of course, an immense amount of time was consumed buying clothes.

Evelyn landed in New York with twenty-five trunks, twelve jewel boxes and a look of all's well with the world.

The fragile Mrs. Samuel Partridge promptly became the material with which society editors padded lead columns. Her life of luxury was complete—her cup of comfort brimmed over. She was absolutely content.

Of Tom Hale she saw nothing. Her news of him came through Peggy Craven, who occasionally accepted invitations to her parties, but who seemed to have drifted from her since her marriage. Peggy was just as full of admiration, but often Evelyn caught in her eyes a look of puzzled measurement.

"You think I wanted you to be unhappy?" the swift question answered her.

"Well, for Tom's sake—you thought I ought to be."

"Tom's the last person in the world to want anything for you but the greatest happiness." Peggy's wistful eyes held a lightning flash of real resentment.

Peggy met the urgent eyes again with that puzzled measurement. "Why should that interest you, Evvy? You cut him out of your reckoning a year and a half ago."

"One never cuts old friends out of the reckoning. I'm as interested in him as I ever was—in a different way; that's all."

"Then you'll be glad to know that Maquiro & Hastings have offered him a partnership. He was going to branch out for himself, and they disapproved that he was too valuable to let go."

"Splendid!" remarked Evelyn—then casually: "Have you been seeing much of him?"

Peggy shook her head. "Not much—nobody has. But he did take two weeks off to come up to Placid. We had some great skating and skiing."

"How does he look?" asked Evelyn.

"Fine," Peggy answered. "Hard work seems to agree with him."

Evelyn pushed away the facile French fingers of her maid with a gesture of impatience. "Heaven! Haven't you finished that yet?"

"Madame—pardon!" the girl's hands dropped.

"Get out my gown! I'll put the wreath on myself."

As the girl disappeared, Evelyn let the filmy pailin slide from her white shoulders and stretched her arms outward.

"How wonderful you look, Evvy!" breathed Peggy Craven. "More beautiful than ever, since you've taken on a little weight."

was the sense that he had no right to succeed without her.

For several months she struggled with the inclination to test him out. It never occurred to her to test herself. She was quite sure! It was curiosity that eventually prompted a note asking him to drop in lunch on the following Sunday. She wanted a bit of a talk with him. Sam was away on business—quite by chance, of course—and they would be alone.

His reply was as brief as it was non-illuminating. His sincere regrets, but he was going Sunday. She did not hesitate to give him an alternative. Would he dine an evening next week? She was tired and a fire-side chat with an old friend would be so welcome. She would call him tomorrow to find out what night would suit him. It was couched in most casual, most impersonal terms. If he refused under these terms, it must be because he was afraid of her.

But his word of next day was firm and quiet as he asked if tomorrow night would suit her.

She put on white for him—Tom had always loved her in white—and pearls around her white throat. She entered the drawing room, both hands swept out to him. He took one of them, shook it heartily, dropped it.

"This is pleasant, Evelyn," were his first words, "seeing you so well and—er—comfy."

She led the way toward the double doors at the far end.

"The library is cosier. Shall we try it?"

They sat before an intimate fire until dinner was announced. It was served in the breakfast room at the intimate little table. In the atmosphere was an aura of intimacy. In fact, it was a friendly impersonality most disarming.

She congratulated him on his new affiliation with his old firm.

"It was rather sudden, wasn't it?" she inquired.

"No. I've been specializing in the bankruptcy end of the game for several years."

"You never mentioned it."

"It was a non-committal question. How did you find out now?"

"Peggy told me."

tossed her hat and coat on a chair, and dropped on the chaise-longue.

"You might have let her get me out of these things," she said petulantly.

"Right as well learn to get out of them alone," was his answer. She looked up quickly.

"What do you mean?"

"Just what I said. Things have happened since you left—deuced uncomfortable things."

HE strode the room's length and back without looking at her. Because of the moment's tenacity, he began with more or less of triviality.

"I didn't write you—but I've sold the cars—except the one that I thought up, and that will probably have to be soon. We're getting rid of this house, and the Newport one, too," he added. "I've been waiting for you to get back to close the deal. Your signature is needed, and the new owners want to take possession of both the first of the year."

"Sam!" She was on her feet, breathless.

"It's got to be done—sorry!—and quick. My cash is all tied up in Moore & Company—and Moore & Company have gone to the wall."

"Gone—to the wall?" she murmured. "In other words—I'm broke?"

She stood for a second without moving, staring down at the man who was her husband, hearing his voice as one that comes through a fog at sea.

"It came overnight. They've been stringing along ever since, a truck with them—look me in because they were wabbling—and I didn't know it. I've been keeping them on their feet—"

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"I've been keeping them on their feet—"

"There will be no disgrace, I told you. Hale's promised me that."

"Hale!"

LIKE an electric flash, a signal of lightning, the name shocked across her consciousness.

"Yes. He's been appointed receiver. I know he can be depended upon to settle things the best way possible for us. His friendship for you—"

Her whole being suddenly galvanized, charged with fury.

"His friendship! Do you know what you did? You took me away from his love—the love I've always had—made me sell myself to you! And now you've cheated me—robbed me of everything worth having!"

His small eyes grew smaller, the veins on his face a sharper blue.

"Cheated you, eh? And you gave me a square deal, I suppose? You married me for my money—I knew that. I wanted you—and I was willing to pay. But what did I buy? An exquisite mistress! And what have I today?" He indicated the pier-glass.

She did not turn her head. Her voice was strangled. "I didn't know—you could be so vulgar."

"If I may a thoroughbred," he came back, "I don't look for a truck horse. Our proposition wasn't different from that, any way you look at it. Let's face facts—we'll have to, from now on."

Her head with its gleaming crown went higher.

"I might have gone through with this—like the thoroughbred you bought me for," she returned with the voice of judgment. "But you've made that impossible. I can't live with you any longer and keep my self-respect."

Samuel Partridge gave a last laugh. It was almost a chuckle.

"I thought that was coming," he said. "But I wouldn't be too hasty, my dear. We're tied—for better, for worse—and this is our chance to prove the stuff we're made of. You're excited now—upset! Better think it over."

He went to her desk, brought her a letter from the top of the pile that lay there.

Many Crop Pests Fought by Government Experts

(Continued from First Page.)

titles which have evaded the investigations of science so far as the promulgation of efficient control measures are concerned.

DURING the last summer, Dr. Howard represented the United States Department of Agriculture at the international congress of agriculture at Paris, France. He served as one of the vice presidents of that famous gathering and also was honorary president of the international conference of phyto-pathologists and economic entomologists which convened at Wageningen, Holland. He also attended an international meeting at Madrid devoted to the investigation and study of the olive fly.

During the foreign travels, Dr. Howard consulted with eminent European specialists and investigated the possibilities of importing large quantities of European parasites which will destroy certain plant pests that now prey on American agriculture.

Uncle Sam is already performing highly efficient service in introducing insect parasites which battle and destroy some of the worst pests in the United States. Dr. Howard believes that one of the greatest potential achievements of national entomological science will be to expand and extend this work. This battle of the bugs must be fought in slow but sure. Where immediate control relief is essential, sprays and other methods of extermination necessarily developed, while crop despoilers that resist these attacks may be ultimately conquered by the antagonistic parasite.

In his journeys to and from through foreign lands, Dr. Howard has had many interesting and amusing experiences. The native residents of foreign countries are always greatly interested in the activities of the American "bug hunters." In a certain section of France, one time the natives kept gathering around Dr. Howard and his assistant as they scouted the fields for parasites. Finally one of the authorities of the neighboring village appeared and made a statement which immediately dispersed the crowd. He said that the American scientist had discovered that every millionth bug they found bore a costly diamond in its head and that they were searching for this millionth bug. The natives at once agreed that men who would hunt for diamond mines in the heads of insects were not worthy of their attention.

One day, down in the heart of Mexico, Dr. Howard stopped for dinner with a "ranchero." He was eating, a large bug alighted on the table cover. As the scientist grabbed at the bug, his host uttered warnings in a language conglomeration, embracing three different tongues. "Guardese! Guardese! Zai animalito sting like a dev." The multiple language warning came too late as Dr. Howard had already picked up the bug and become victim to its sting.

On another occasion, the Governor of Oaxaca, Mexico, was very interested about sending a troop of armed soldiers—"rancheros"—back to the country as an escort for the American entomologist. Knowing that the country was not dangerous, Dr. Howard protested, saying that he had no need for the services of the soldiers. "Well, at least," replied the governor, "they can help you hunt bugs, can't they?"

In the course of his entomological explorations, Dr. Howard once visited the city of Sebastopol, Crimea. As he was eating his dinner, a native, carrying a huge book under his arm, directed for the American sting was directed to the proper table. He graciously greeted Dr. Howard, saying in German that he came from the mayor of the city to extend felicitations.

"What is the object of your large book?" inquired the Washingtonian. "It is an American dictionary," responded the visitor. He brought the count so that I could talk easily and fluently with you in your home language."

Assam Silk.

A CURIOUS sort of silk-producing caterpillar was long ago introduced to the world in Assam, where the natives call it "eri." It has been used for silk spinning for centuries; but, strange to say, its employment for the purpose has been restricted almost exclusively to that region. The British government in India, however, has taken steps toward the utilization of this caterpillar with a view to producing its silk on a large scale.

One of its advantages is that its cocoons are not sealed, like those of the ordinary silkworm. The larva leaves one end of its cocoon closed, only with conversing loops of silk. This renders it unnecessary to kill the insect when its silk is used.



EVELYN'S MAID STARTED TO UNPACK HER BAGS. "SEND THEM AWAY," SAID SAM, ABRUPTLY.